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European Council backs Prohibition of Antibiotic Growth Promoters

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Report Highlights:
The Dec 16-17 Farm Council reached political agreement on the proposal for a regulation on additives for use in animal nutrition which will ban the four remaining antibiotic growth promoters authorized in feed (Flavophospholipol, Monensin sodium, Salinomycin sodium and Avilamycin) as of January 2006.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
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Summary
The Dec 16-17 EU Farm Council reached political agreement on the proposal for a regulation on additives for use in animal nutrition which will ban the four remaining antibiotic growth promoters authorized in feed (Flavophospholipol, Monensin sodium, Salinomycin sodium and Avilamycin) as of January 2006 even though Austria and Germany expressed the views that the deadline for phasing out the antibiotics was not soon enough. The Council endorsed the Commission's proposal permitting the further use of coccidiostats and histomonostats as additives with a deadline shortened to four years instead of seven years until an application for re-authorization becomes necessary. However, in order to respond to concerns expressed by Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Finland and by the European Parliament during its first reading of the proposal, the Commission committed to presenting a report on the need to prohibit coccidiostats and histomonostats by the end of 2007. The final text of the Regulation is likely to be agreed between the Council and the European Parliament during the first half of 2003.

Background
In March of this year, The European Commission released its proposal on feed additives. The European Parliament gave its opinion in November 2002 under the co-decision procedure.

The regulation would ban the four remaining antibiotic growth promoters authorized in feed (Flavophospholipol, Monensin sodium, Salinomycin sodium and Avilamycin) as of January 2006. Coccidiostats, even if they are of antibiotic origin, will continue to be allowed.

The proposed ban is part of the Commission's proposal to streamline safety rules and marketing authorizations for all feed additives; it does not affect authorizations as veterinary medicines. Under the new rules, the European Food Safety Authority will be in charge of the risk assessment for all new additives and it will re-evaluate all currently authorized additives. There are currently two types of authorizations: with a time limit and without a time limit. An application for the first group will have to be submitted at least one year before the expiry date of the authorization. Applications for additives authorized for an unlimited period of time will have to be submitted within seven years after entry into force of the Regulation. An exception is made for coccidiostats: an application will have to be submitted within four years after the entry into force of the Regulation. The new rules will require that companies demonstrate the positive effect for the animal and the absence of risk for human health, animal health and the environment.

The proposal to ban these antibiotics came as no surprise as authorization for a first tranche of antibiotic growth promoters had already been withdrawn in 1997/98 and the Scientific Steering Committee had recommended the phase-out of the remaining four antibiotics in feed.

The new rules will affect meat imports from countries that allow these antibiotics in feed. Meat imports will continue to be allowed provided they meet still to be fixed residue limits.